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ABSTRACT

A series of lessons, designed to provide adult students of English as a second language with experience in listening to English, are intended for beginning students who can recognize only isolated words within a stream of speech. Some more advanced listening practice, including recognition of phrases and formulas, and exercises in understanding the general topic or situation are also introduced. In general, each lesson consists of a series of brief audiotaped excerpts (transcripts included) from radio, television, and telephone conversations on the same topics. The students' task is to isolate from the text the feature in question and identify it, which involves tolerating the unfamiliar parts. The students are encouraged to focus on what they can expect to understand and then to use their existing understanding to determine the text's general meaning. The lessons' topics include time and temperature, address and telephone numbers, abbreviations, greetings and partings, and emotions. Suggestions for additional topics include time expressions, location, weather reports, commercials, famous people, famous places, current events, and dates. (MSE)

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EVEN BEGINNERS CAN LISTEN TO REAL ENGLISH: LISTENING ACTIVITIES FOR BEGINNING ADULT LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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Ann Salzmann
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The purpose of these lessons is to provide experience and develop confidence in listening to English for adult learners of ESL, at the beginning level. They were developed for an Adult Education ESL class, whose members said they never listened to the radio because they couldn't understand anything.

Most of the lessons would fall into the category termed by Taylor (1981) "stage 2" listening, in which students can recognize only isolated words within a stream of speech. At this stage, the goal is for them to learn to "tolerate great quantities of unknown language and to play an identification game with parts already known." (Taylor) As Taylor says, most listening programs ignore this important stage and are designed for those students who already have some "stage 3" abilities (recognition of phrases and formulas and understanding of the general topic or situation). Some "stage 3" listening practice is introduced, as well, because these students are living in an English-speaking community, and must use some English regularly.

In general, each lesson consists of a series of short (audio-) taped excerpts from radio, television, and telephone conversations on the same one or two topics (e.g.: time/temperature). The students' task is to isolate from the text the feature in question and then identify it. This means tolerating the unfamiliar parts and focusing on what they can expect to understand. The next step is to use what they are able to understand to guess as much as they can of the general meaning of the text.

All of the lessons presented in class proved challenging to the students. In fact, on the first hearing they invariably gasped and seemed to consider the tapes impossible to understand. But with help focusing on specific familiar features, they all rose to the challenge and seemed to feel real satisfaction in being able to find some meaning in them after all. The benefit appears to be cumulative, so more regular practice with material of this sort would probably bring more positive results.

A brief description of the lessons follows.

Taylor, Harvey M. "Learning to Listen," TESOL Quarterly, Vol. 15, Number 1. March 1981

1. Time/temperature

This lesson was presented within the first few weeks of the class. Students had been introduced to numbers and had played "number Bingo," Telling time had also been introduced briefly. The first time they heard the tape, it was stopped after each excerpt and the students were asked to identify it as the time or the temperature. The second time, each excerpt was played as many times as necessary for someone in the group to be able to repeat the correct time or temperature given. It was then written on the blackboard and the excerpt played once more. At this hearing, most students who had not been able to understand the numbers before were able to recognize them. After all of the excerpts had been listed on the board in this way, the entire tape was played again without stopping. Then the board was erased and students were asked to write each time or temperature as they heard the tape once more. The tape was then played again, and the times and temperatures written on the board again as students checked their papers. We found that most of the students were able to write the times and temperatures correctly. Finally, the entire tape was played one last time.

The times and temperatures were:

1.	42°	10.	2 after 4	19.	22°	27.	3:00
2.	36°	11.	13 after 4	20.	3:07	28.	20 before the hour
3.	3:30	12.	4:16	21.	3:17	29.	39°
4.	3:31	13.	4:25	22.	22°	30.	12 minutes before 3
5.	3:34	14.	4:34	23.	23 after the hour	31.	8 o'clock
6.	38°	15.	2:00			32.	36°
7.	9 before 4	16.	quarter after 2	24.	3:30	33.	3:21
8.	6 before 4	17.	24 in front of 3	25.	22°	34.	3:30
9.	3:59	18.	coming up on 3	26.	37°	35.	10 o'clock

2. Address/telephone number

This lesson was presented a week or two after the first one, in the same way. The only variation was that after the students had identified the excerpt as containing an address or a telephone number, the address, minus the number, was written on the board (usually with the help of students), so that the class could then focus on the number.

The telephone numbers and addresses were:

1.	800-228-5500	5.	306½ E. Green	9.	500 W. Church St.
2.	356-7511	6.	315 S. Neil St.	10.	100 W. University, Ch.
3.	352-9244	7.	1906 W. Bradley Ave.		
4.	608 E. Green	8.	1-800-228-2020		

3. Abbreviations

This lesson was presented after the students had been introduced to letter pronunciations, played "alphabet Bingo," arranged themselves in alphabetical order, rearranged dictated letters to spell words, etc. The tape was presented in the same way as the first lessons, except that since the excerpts all contained abbreviations, the first step was not done. As the letters of the abbreviations were identified, the question, "What does _____ stand for?" was asked and if none of the students knew, or could guess from the context of the tape, the class was told. After the class had completed the lesson, as outlined for the earlier lessons, the students were asked orally to identify the abbreviations from their definitions. ("What is a place where you can learn to swim?" "What is the U.S. national police force?" ...)

The abbreviations were:

1. WLRW .. FM	6. DC-10	11. U of I
2. CBS	7. JFK	12. FBI
3. AFL-CIO	8. HBO	13. U.S.
4. K104	9. C-U	14. WICD
5. YMCA	10. FDIC	

4. Greetings/partings

This lesson involved first identifying the general purpose of parts of conversations involving a variety of speakers and registers as greetings or partings. After this was done orally, students listened to the tape again, checking "Hello" or "Good-bye" on paper for each excerpt, and then checking their papers together as in previous lessons. Then each excerpt was heard again, and students asked what words or phrases indicated to them that it was a greeting or a parting. These words and phrases were listed on the board under the headings "Hello" and "Good-bye." The students were then given papers with written transcriptions of the conversations. As they listened to each excerpt, they were asked to indicate if it was saying "Hello" or "Good-bye," to underline the words or phrases that influenced their choice, and to guess as much as they could about the speakers, their relationships, and the situations. They worked in groups to do this, and answers were compared orally.

A transcript of the excerpts follows.

Greetings and Partings

Hello	Good-bye	
		1. A: (Knock. Knock.) B: Who is it? A: I'd like to talk to you ....
		2. A: Good evening. This is the CBS Evening News, Dan Rather reporting.
		3. A: So, if there's nothing else ... B: No, no, that's fine. A: OK. Bye. See you later.
		4. A: (Knock. Knock.) B: Rene! I'm glad to see you. Listen, I wondered what happened to you. A: What happened to me was, I found you a new home!
		5. A: Hey! Louie, my main man! How's it going? B: No complaints. A: Louie, I've got a friend here I'd like you to meet. Todd, this is Louie; Louie, Todd. B: Good to meet you. C: Glad to meet you. B: What are you two having? C: I think I'll have scotch on the rocks. A: And I'll just have a beer for a change. B: Still taking care of yourself. A: Oh yeah. Hey, Louie. Have you seen Angel? B: She's due in here any minute.
		6. A: Well, hello Grandma, Grandpa. B: Ah. C: Jessica, darling! How good to see you! B: Yes, it is. Sit down. A: Thank you.
		7. A: Well, I hate to break up this discussion, but I have to get to my rounds, or I'm going to have a lot of angry patients on my hands. B: Yes, I think maybe I'd better go, too. Jessica, darling, it's just so good seeing you! C: Yeah, it's good seeing you, too, Grandma. A: Good-bye, Jessica. C: Bye, Grandpa. B: Bye, dear.

Hello	Good-bye	
		8. A: Excuse me, have you seen Sister Angelique around here in the last hour or so? B: No, I haven't A: Oh, could you page her for me? B: Certainly A: Oh, never mind.
		9. A: Hope! Hi! I hear you're looking for me all over the hospital. B: That's right. I want to talk to you. A: Oh, OK. Well, let's just go in here.
		10. A: ... wait until we hear from you. B: Yes. OK. Thank you very much. I'll call you soon. A: OK. B: Bye-bye. A: Bye-bye.
		11. A: Hello? B: Hi! Is Bruce there? This is Ray Randolph. A: Oh, Hi, Ray. No, he isn't home from work yet. May I have him call you? B: Well, ...
		12. (A:) Ah ha! Just the man I want to see. Come inside, please.
		13. (A:) Come in, Miss Chandler. You have a visitor. It's Dr. Curtis.
		14. A: Neil! B: Hi, Blondie. It's wonderful to see you again. A: Yes.
		15. A: Well, OK. No, I'll look around some more. B: OK. A: OK. Thanks, anyway. B: Bye.
		16. A: Hello. B: Is Peter there? A: Just a minute.
		17. A: Hi, Anna. How are you doing? B: Hello, Bo. Well, let's say I've had better mornings. A: Yeah. Tell me about it!

Hello	Good-bye	
		18. A: Oh, well, on that reassuring note, I think I'll leave. B: All right. Thanks. Talk to you soon. A: Oh, you're welcome. I'll see you later. B: Bye. A: Bye.
		19. A: Well, I'll be over at my folks' house if you need me. B: So long. ...
		20. A: Here they are. B: Oh, hi, Melissa. A: Got a little room to sit there? B: You bet. A: I'm sorry we're late ....
		21. ..... A: Hello, Maggie. B: There we are. C: Oh, hi! D: Hi! C: Hi. How you guys doing? B: We're doing just great, thank you. How about you? A: Well, in their own wonderful world, obviously, and maybe even on top of it, eh?
		22. A: What's going on? B: No, no, nothing's going on. Why don't you just go on home and change? Could you? Please. A: You wouldn't be trying to get rid of me, would you? B: No, quit that. Absolutely not, no. A: Um hm. Then why ...? B You don't have to "why" anything, sweetheart. Just go, alright? Please. A: What have I done? B: Honey, listen. I'll meet you at "Doug's Place." Alright? We'll have dinner. This is an emergency. Alright? Put your coat on, please .... Please. A: Yes. B: Thanks, darling.
		23. A: I'll see you later. B: OK. Be careful. A: OK.' B: See you tomorrow. A: OK.

Hello	Good-bye	
		24. (Ring! Ring!) A: Sgt. Carver. B: Abe, we've got an emergency here at "Doug's Place." A: What is it, Doug? B: Melissa just spotted Pete ...
		25. A: Hi, Maggie, Don. B: How are you? C: Hi, Mickie. A: I'll just take a minute. I just wanted to welcome you back from Hawaii. C: That's very s eet of you. A: Uh, you two had a great time, I hope. B: Yes, it was just great. A: Good.
		26. A: Hello, Mickie. B: Hey, Abe. Thanks for getting here so fast. A: I did what I could. C: Abe, Abe. I suppose you want to talk to Melissa about Pete Jannings. Right? A: Yeah, I want to cover that definitely, but first things first. B: What do you mean "first things"? A: I want to talk to you about ....

5. Emotions

The final lesson to be presented in class this year concerns emotions. Students will identify emotions expressed in several short conversations, indicate key words or phrases, and attempt to guess about the speakers and contexts, in much the same way as outlined above.

The emotions represented are:*

1. worry
2. surprise
3. anger (jealosy)
4. fear
5. excitement/happiness

6. Other suggested lessons

In addition to the 5 lessons outlined, material for other lessons might include:

a. time expressions - students would identify time expressions and attempt to understand what happened, happens, will happen, etc., and when.

b. locations - students would identify expressions of location and attempt to understand what is in, on, under, next to what.

c. weather reports - students would listen for temperatures and adjectives/verbs of weather, and attempt to summarize.

d. commercials - students would identify well-known products being advertized, and try to list claims being made for them.

e. famous people - students would identify well-known names and try to understand the information given about them.

f. famous places - students would identify well-known places and try to understand what happened there.

g. current events - students would identify current issues reported in a run-down of news headlines, and attempt to understand what happened where.

h. dates - students would identify days, months, years, and attempt to understand what is said about them.

* [a transcript of the excerpts follows]

Emotions

_____ 1. A: This move. That's what's worrying me. I mean, we've got to figure out how to handle it. Got any ideas?
B: No, I really don't.
A: Look, we've got to figure it out. I mean, this is crucial, Renee! I'm taking a big risk here. I could get caught!
B: David, will you just not worry? We'll think of something. Look, we always do.

_____ 2. A: I don't know that I believe my ears. Are you trying to tell me that Mary Anderson is finally finished with Alex Marshall?!!
B: That's right.
A: I don't believe it!
B: Well, don't be shocked. I mean, I'm really happy about it. As a matter of fact, I've started to see someone else.
A: You're kidding!!
B: Would I kid you about something like that?

_____ 3. A: How are things going in school?
B: A lot better than they're going outside!
A: What?!
B: Look, I didn't come here to talk about school!!
A: Hope, I can see you're upset. What's bothering you?
B: You're darn right I'm upset!
A: Well, is it about Jake?
B: Yes, it's about Jake, as if you didn't know!!
A: What is that supposed to mean?
B: Oh, get off it, Angelique! And you can stop this little innocent routine with me.
A: I don't know what you're talkin about.
B: Oh, of course you don't! Look, I'm sick of this! The game is over!
A: What game?
B: The one you're playing with me!
A: Hope, you're going to have to explain yourself, because I really don't know ...
B: You and Jake! I know you've been going out with him.

_____ 4. A: Oh, no!!
B: Why? What's the matter? What happened?
A: The computer!! It's happening again!! Someone's going to be killed, Abe!!!
B: Oh, boy!

_____ 5. A: Oh, Neil! Neil! I love you! When is it going to happen? How soon? I don't want to wait any longer!!
B: Can you wait about 15 days? It's going to take them that long to set it up.
A: 15 days! That's forever! Oh, I'll wait, I'll wait! What else have I got to do? I'll wait. I love you! I love you! I love you!!!!